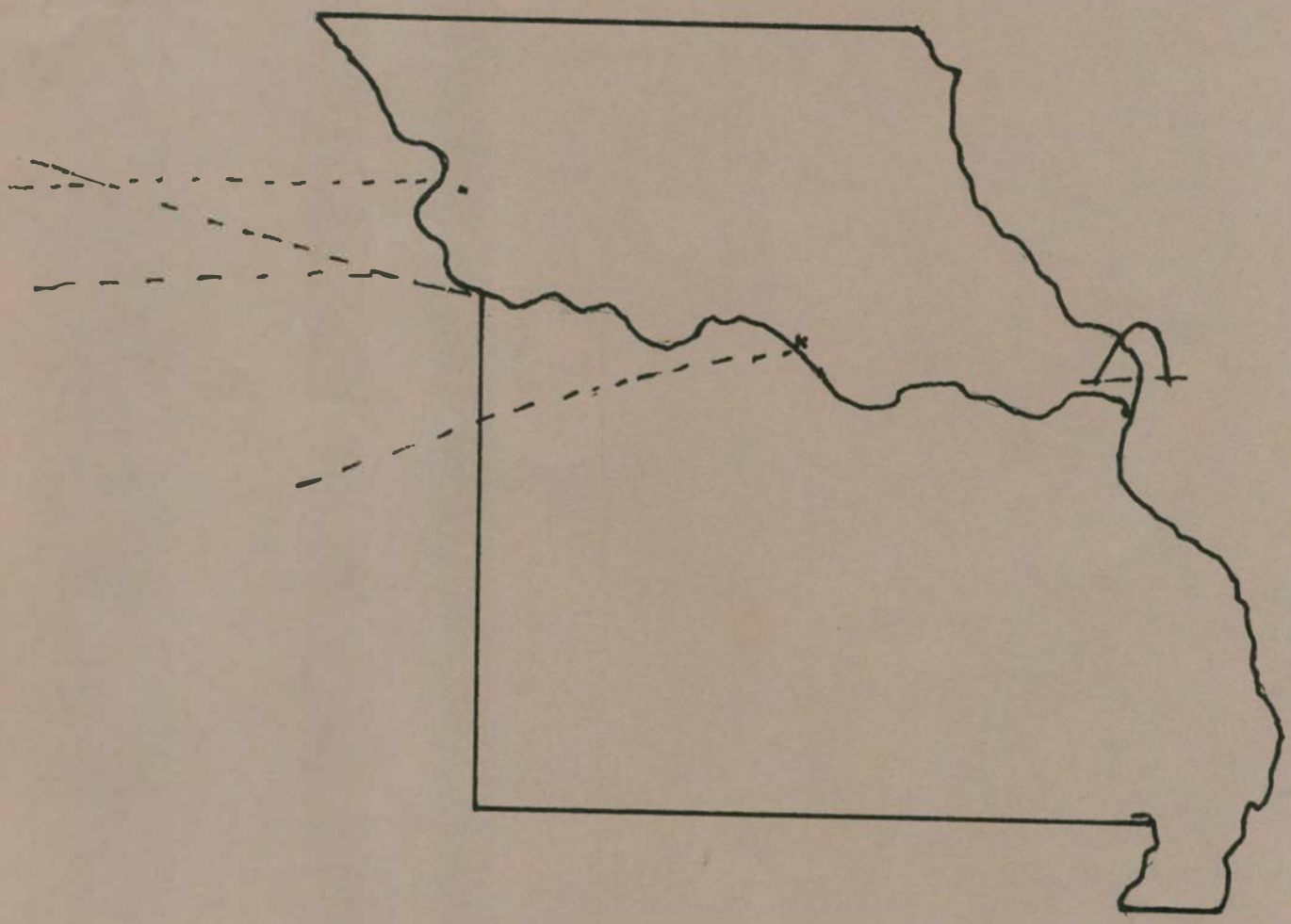
TOWARD THE SETTING SUN



The Historical Journal
of
The United Methodist Church
The Missouri Area

Welcome to the first issue of our Missouri United Methodist Historical Journal. The title, "Toward the Setting Sun", is an expression of our rich heritage in Missouri. When the General Conference first described the boundaries of the Missouri Conference, the western boundary was set at "the farthest settler's cabin toward the setting sun". It also helps symbolize Missouri's role as "The Gateway to the West" and "The Mother of Conferences". In addition to the vast river traffic, first by canoe, then by steamboat, which helped to open up the west, nearly all the major overland trails began in Missouri. Out along them poured the thousands of trappers, traders, settlers---and circuit riders---who settled the great areas of the Louisiana, Oregon, California, and Arizona territories.

This first issue of the Journal indicates the direction we want future issues to take. Our dream is that it will be a mix of articles dealing with state-wide issues, such as the one on Black Methodism; with more limited geographical areas, such as the article on St. Louis; with local churches; and with news events relating to history. We have been promised material on churches in Springfield, campus ministry, Camp Jo-Ota, plus a number of local items.

We'd like to receive your contribution. If you have questions about how to prepare an article, please drop me a note about them. We'd appreciate your sharing this issue with a friend and encouraging their subscription. God willing, this will be the first in a long line of issues sharing our rich heritage.

John

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METHODISM'S BICENTENNIAL

by

J.C. MONTGOMERY, JR.

> "While this record of the rise and progress of Methodism is being finished, notes of preparation are being heard in the land. A hundred years ago the Christmas Conference was held. Then the Church was organized with the eighty-three preachers and fifteen thousand members, which now numbers the former by thousands and the latter by millions. The times favor a Centennial Celebration, and as to the place of meeting, Baltimore has no rival. The graves of Asbury and Lee are there, and not far away sleeps the noble Strawbridge. And there, as from a mount of vision, may the people called Methodists, grateful for what God has done for them and by them in the past, catch an inspiring view of what God will do for them and by them, if faithful to their principles, in the next HUNDRED YEARS."[1]

These words with which Bishop McTyeire concluded his monumental History of Methodism in 1884 serve as a fitting introduction a consideration of Methodism's Bicentennial of 1984. Although Baltimore will be the site of United Methodism's 1984 General Conference, the Bicentennial will have a pan-Methodist flavor and thrust later in the year when representatives of five Methodist/Wesleyan churches will be brought together in a reproduction of the historic Christmas Conference of 1784 in that same city.

Although there had been informal planning and discussion concerning the 1984 Bicentennial in upper echelons of the church prior to the 1976 General Conference, it was that body which really set the machinery in motion for the scheduled happening of those eight years hence. A part of the Episcopal Address was a call to action:

> "We pray that The United Methodist Church will be prompted to make the 200th anniversary of the Christmas Conference a time for realizing in 1984 what the revolutionary church leaders hoped for in 1784."[2]

The 1976 General Conference committed to the General Council

on Ministries and the Council of Bishops the responsibility for developing plans for the bicentennial celebration of American Methodism. Accordingly a Bicentennial Planning Committee was established as an adjunct group of the General Council on Ministries and made its report through that latter group to the appropriate committee and plenary of the Indianapolis General Conference.

As adopted by that 1980 General Conference, the bicentennial observance would revolve around a three-fold theme:

- CLAIMING THE PAST

  . . . with its joy and sorrow

- CELEBRATING THE PRESENT

  . . . with its hope and uncertainty

- CHALLENGING THE FUTURE

  . . . with its risk and promise.[3]

Bishop Earl G. Hunt, chairperson of the 1977-80 Bicentennial Planning Committee and a member of the 1981-84 Bicentennial Committee reiterated the guidelines for the celebration in an article in The Interpreter magazine:

- To usher in a revolutionary new era in United Methodism.
- To reflect and affirm our inclusiveness.
- To include celebration and repentance.
- To be pan-Methodist and ecumenical.
- To be coordinated by a national committee.
- To be encouraged at all levels of the church's life; and, last,
- Reflect Christian stewardship of income and resources.[4]

The pan-Methodist character of the observance is being planned

and coordinated by a committee comprising representatives of five Methodist/Wesleyn communions. They are: African Methodist Episcopal (AME); African Methodist Episcopal Zion (AMEZ); Christian Methodist Episcopal (CME); Free Methodist; and United Methodist Church (UMC). This inter-church committee is planning certain Advent and Christmas events, television programs, joint celebrations on Aldersgate Sunday 1984, study seminars on the future of Methodism, a number of publications, inlcuding a common planbook, and mission thrusts to meet human need.

The Methodist Bicentennial in Missouri will be expressed on four levels - area, conference, district and local church - each of which should make a contribution to the other. In 1981 Bishop W.T.Handy, Jr., appointed an Area Bicentennial Commission to plan programs for that entity and to suggest further programs for the Missouri East and West Conferences as well as districts and local churches.

Several results have come already through the work of the area committee. Through the auspices of Central Methodist College, a bicentennial drama will be produced for the annual conference sessions of 1984. Professor Donald Eidson and Mrs. Pan Howell are assuming responsibility for this anticipated program. The respective Boards of Discipleship (or Evangelism) have been asked to collaborate in designing an evangelism program for the Missouri Area. The conference boards of Church and Society have been at work making suggestions of ministries of social justice which local churches may attempt, at least one new venture each year.

Local churches are being urged to update their histories, or to write one if none exists. It is hoped that each church will

plan its own observance as particularly suited to that congregation's need. A national resource available for local church use is the multi-media study packet, "Jubilee," which has resources dealing with Methodism for two age groups, children and youth/adults. These packets are available in September through the Cokesbury Regional Service Centers.

The conferences' Commissions on Archives and History will be sponsoring information notebooks on every pastor and local church. Included will be brief histories of each church together with a photograph of the church building and parsonage plus a biographical sketch of the pastor along with his or her picture. It is anticipated that one copy of this workbook will be in the conference office and the district segment in each superintendent's office. District lay leaders have been asked to take responsibility for this project.

With the concurrence of the Commissions on Archives and History, the conference approved the establishment of a Missouri Methodist Historical Society. Initial memberships were accepted at the 1982 conference sessions, and there is information about memberships and the historical journal in this issue. It promises to be an exciting adventure for lovers of Methodism and church history.

Surely the Missouri people called Methodists can find in the bicentennial an occasion for church renewal. The late Dr. Frank C. Tucker reminds us that at the centennial (1884) in our state "a sense of historical oneness of the Churches was made vivid, which animated progress along the converging paths which should finally bring the separated churches to unity."[5]

The goals of the bicentennial are no less crucial. The aim for church growth and church extension as well as the expansion of ministries of social justice are worthy successors to the outcome

of the first Christmas Conference whose announced goal was "to reform the continent and spread Scriptural holiness throughout the land." Methodism's 1984 can be a fitting answer to the Orwellian prophecies threatening the children of God everywhere.

Notes

[1] McTyeire, Holland N., History of Methodism, p.686. Nashville: Lamar & Smith, 1884

[2] Quoted in The Daily Christian Advocate, 1980 Advance Edition, D-72.

[3] Ibid., D-74

[4] Feb. 1981, p.24

[5] The Methodist Church in Missouri, 1798-1939, p.200. Nashville: Parthenon, 1966.

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BLACK METHODISM IN MISSOURI
1807-1844

John O. Gooch

This paper is the beginning of a study of the Black Methodist Church in Missouri. The years chosen reflect the period between the beginnings of Methodist work in Missouri and the separation of the church into northern and southern branches. At this point, the Methodist sources for the results of anti-slavery agitation, both before and after the Missouri Compromise, are too scanty to shed much light.

Sources for the entire period are scant, and not easily accessible. There are some early histories, but they are often casual about documentation. The GENERAL MINUTES of the church contain statistical data, but these are not always reported exactly, so that we sometimes find two different sets of membership reports for the same year. In addition, statistics only suggest and tantalize. They do not give us the beating heart of a people. The Journals of the circuit riders, when available, are invaluable, as are the back issues of the Western Christian Advocate and the St. Louis Christian Advocate. These are in archives not easily accessible to the part-time researcher. Therefore, much research still needs to be done on this early period, and the conclusions offered here are strictly tentative.

Methodism came into Missouri very early in the history of the territory. As early as 1797, John Clark preached to a few families near present-day Herculaneum, but that was a sporadic effort, and no permanent church resulted. In 1805, Joseph Oglesby was sent on a tour of the new American possessions west of the Mississippi, to sound out Methodist prospects. He travelled up the Missouri River as far as the Femme Osage (where he visited with Daniel Boone and Flanders Callaway) and apparently returned by way of the Murphy Settlement (present-day Farmington). There were some 200 English-speaking persons in Missouri, and Oglesby reported them all as prospective Methodists.[1]

Oglesby's report to the Western Conference led to the appointment, in 1807, of John Travis to the 'Missourie' Circuit, which did not even exist.[2] His task was to find the people, organize classes, begin a preaching schedule, and pastor to a flock scattered over the length and breadth of the new territory. The conference minutes of 1808 report statistics from two circuits in Missouri: the Missouri, which included all the settlements north of the Meramec River and along the Missouri, and the 'Maramack' (sic), which included the settlements along and south of the Meramec River. The Missouri Circuit reported 56 members; the Meramec 44 white and 6 colored members.[3] By 1810, there were five circuits, with memberships as follows:

Maramack	354	
Missouri	102	
Cold Water	75	
Cape Girardeau	52	2 colored[4].

We believe there must have been black members of some of the other circuits, since they appear in both 1809 and 1811, but how many it is difficult to determine. (In 1810, the total population of Missouri was 20,845, including both white and black.[5])

Missouri Methodism followed the pattern of the rest of the denomination in being associated with ministry to blacks from the beginning. As early as 1758, John Wesley had baptized the first Negro Methodist.[6] The first Methodist congregation in New York (1766) included a Negro girl, and a Sunday School organized by Francis Asbury in Maryland that year included both white and black children.[7]

In 1816, almost one-fourth of the Methodists in the United States were Negroes.[8] Obviously, the majority of these would be in the South, and plantation missions were strong. The policy of white masters and black slaves meeting together for worship had been formulated as early as 1780. One of the questions of the Conference of that year was:

> Ought not the assistant to meet the coloured people himself, and appoint as helpers in his absence proper white persons, and not suffer them to stay late and meet by themselves? (A) Yes.[9]

Often in established congregations, there were separate galleries for the slaves, but it was still a common practice for both races to worship together. The Southern fear of slave insurrections was probably as much a factor in promoting common meetings as was any sense of fitness about it, but even Southerners were convinced of the need to evangelize the slaves. Bishop James O. Andrew said to the South Carolina Conference in

1832:

> ...we are fully persuaded that it is not only safe, but highly expedient to society at large, to furnish the slaves as fully as possible with the means of true scriptural instruction and the worship of God.[10]

Much the same attitudes prevailed in Missouri. The evidence is scanty and scattered through the journals of white circuit riders, but clear and unmistakable. Methodists were concerned with taking the gospel to the slaves, and with incorporating them into the body of the Methodist Church. David Rice McAnally, the great apologist for Southern Methodism in Missouri, in speaking of the years 1812-1814, said:

> Many families (emigrating to Missouri) brought their household servants, or slaves--generally few in number, from two to half a dozen in a family. ....The newcomer usually had but a single family; and the distinction between master and servant in these families was more in color than in anything else. They lived pretty much on the same plane, and while the master and owner directed and governed the labor, they all worked together for the common good. They were clothed with pretty much the same kind of material, ate of the same kind of food, often slept under the same roof and shared the same toils, amusements, and devotions. They counseled together for the promotion of their mutual interest: the slave expressed his opinion or gave his advice as freely as his master or mistress; nor did he often wait to be solicited. If the family were religious, the slaves followed the example, were present as part of the family at the morning and evening devotions, and joined in and sometimes led these devotions with an earnestness and fervor truly Christian. The master or mistress would read a portion of the Scriptures, then 'line the hymn', that is, read two lines at a time which all joined in singing, and then the master or one of the servants would offer the prayer.

> The early preachers understood and appreciated these servants as a valuable factor in their own success; and on the occasions of their visits to the settlements, the Colored people received a large share of their pastoral solicitude and attention. They often called upon some Colored man to lead in prayer at the prayer - and other social meetings, and not infrequently to conclude with prayer the regular exercises on the occasions of preaching. Nearly all of them being good singers, and loving to sing, they joined that part of the public service with great animation, which often imparted a thrilling interest that otherwise would not have been felt; and instances are on record where extensive revivals were carried on among the White settlers by the labors of Colored men.[11]

One suspects that this idyllic state existed only for the brief period before the major emigrations from slave-holding states, and even then perhaps as much in fond memory as in reality. There is, however, considerable evidence to substantiate McAnally's comments about the participation of blacks in Methodist services.

John Scripps, who was the secretary of the Conference, records that during the year 1817-18, he formed a class at General Ramsey's settlement (across the river from present Jefferson City)

> where Mrs. Ramsey, her father-in-law, Mrs. Ferguson and Brother Tom (the name he principally went by), an old Methodist Negro, four in all, joined this year.[12]

In the conference year of 1819-20, Scripps was again on that Booneslick Circuit, working against the Missouri Compromise, and gaining hundreds of signatures to petitions against admitting Missouri as a slave state. This was an amazing feat, considering that the Booneslick Circuit was in Howard County, which had always had a high percentage of slaves in its population. This leads one

to wonder if Scripps were not correct in arguing that slavery would soon have been abolished in Missouri had it not been for the Compromise and for abolitionists.[13] He preached against slavery at Mr. Ferguson's, and several slaveholders responded by putting in their names for membership in the church. Concerning the black members, he says

> At subsequent meetings several others (slaveholders) joined, and a large class of white and colored was quickly formed, in connection with the four who had joined when I was last here, of whom, by unanimous vote, Brother Tom was made Leader, and an efficient Leader he was; for the Class, at least during the four months I was on the circuit, flourished under him. I once attended one of his night-meetings for prayer. There was a full congregation. I refused his request to conduct the services, but assisted him. At a proper season, he invited mourners. Three Colored people came forward, over whom for a short period he stood, and while tears chased each other in quick succession down his sable cheeks, delivered (I will not say a most appropriate, only, but) a most eloquent and feeling address on the subject to the Whites, concluding with a solemn appeal to their sensibilities, that, if they had any confidence in the efficacy of Old Tom's prayers, to come forward also. All were affected, some came forward. The meeting became more and still more interesting, some were blessed, and I felt it a privilege to be there".[14]

We are not sure how large the 'large class' was, but Scripps reported 195 white and 8 colored members to the conference at the end of that year. It is more to our point to note that, at least in that class, whites and blacks freely worshipped together, blacks were chosen by vote of both black and white members to positions of leadership, and blacks apparently had some freedom to speak on matters of conscience and the salvation of the soul. It would be interesting to know if Brother Tom were actually a slave, or a free black.

Since he lived in Howard County, he was most probably a slave. This does indeed make the meeting 'more and still more interesting', if a slave assumed spiritual responsibility and leadership for those who physically owned him.

A few years later, the Rev. Jacob Lanius began a long and productive career as a Methodist preacher. An early entry in his Journal shows a real concern for the black population of Missouri.

> I have recently determined to pay more attention to our slave population than I have hitherto done. Great and mighty now are the efforts being made for the salvation of the world---but nothing is being done for the slaves in our circuit. If they attend our regular appointments for the whites, the houses are so small that they are compelled to remain out of doors and receive little or no benefit from the preaching...and again if a man preaches in an acceptable style to the whites, the slaves cannot understand him....It really seems to me that if Christ died for them as well as for us they ought to be attended to. I expect that I shall be rewarded when I convert them as well as a 'crowd of Europeans'....In executing my determination I expect to receive the reproach of the proud and haughty white man, but I want to save souls, as well the black as the white.... after preaching three hours and a quarter on baptism during the night I preached the funeral of two black men to the Negroes---we had a good time, the crowd was praising God, 3 Negroes joined the church....this encouraged me in my resolution.[15]

In addition to the insight into the concern and motivation of the Rev. Mr. Lanius, several other points appear in that citation. At least on the Paris Circuit in 1834, where services

were held in homes, blacks were forced to remain out-of-doors and not share with the whites. This fact, coupled with Lanius' expectation that, in preaching to blacks, he will receive the reproach of the white man, leads one to believe that the growing tension in the nation over slavery and the proper relationship of the races is being reflected in the Methodist Church. Note also that he feels the same sermon cannot communicate effectively to both whites and blacks. (At the end of the year, Lanius reported 189 white and 17 black members on the circuit, so his conviction apparently bore some fruit. The figures had been 76 and 1 in 1833, so he also apparently did not alienate too many whites.)

In 1836, Lanius was on the Bellwood and Meramec Circuits, and continuing to work with slaves, as his Journal entries indicate.

> Sunday, Mar. 6th---preached at the Virginia Mines, had a very powerful time. The Christians of every order rejoiced with joy unspeakable and full of glory. I found a class of 4 whites and 8 blacks attended. Six negro men came forward to receive the prayers of the church....We had a precious session indeed. [16]

Here, at least in the small class meeting, the two races still worshipped freely together.

> March 23---In the morning I rode 12 miles to the little school near what is called three forks of Black River and at 1 pm () and preached to the blacks as they are numerously called. Some of the

> people seemed to be very devoted. All seemed to be extremely poor in the world's goods. Some as much as they could possibly be, having little less than a little cabin, a few acres of clear land...and a few articles of domestic use.[17]

Here it is not clear if the blacks Lanius is preaching to are slave or free. His description of their economic condition leads one to wonder if these are not indeed free blacks.

McAnally's statement about the circuit riders depending on the black population finds support in Lanius' Journal entry for July 17, 1836: "there is little religion here except among the negroes".[18] On the 28th of the same month, he began a camp meeting along with his co-worker on the circuit, a Baptist, and a colored Methodist preacher from the Gasconade Circuit.[19] The appointed pastor for the Gasconade Circuit that year was J. M'Ewing, so the black preacher must have been a local preacher or exhorter, rather than a member of the conference. However, it is significant that black preachers were free to travel, and to share in religious leadership with the white preachers.

With that background in mind, let us turn to the statistical record and examine what actually happened in Missouri in terms of black membership in the churches. In the early years, with circuits widely scattered among a tiny population, records were

difficult to keep, and reporting was not always as accurate as one would wish. Nevertheless, it is obvious that Methodism grew quickly in Missouri, from its humble beginnings in 1807. One of the most valuable documents dating from the period is the Membership report for 1821, the year Missouri became a state.

Missouri District

Buffaloe	106 whites	4 colored
Missouri	140 whites	23 colored
Cedar Creek	125 whites	24 colored
Boonslick	126 whites	20 colored
Lamoine	142 whites	15 colored
Gasconade	125 whites	32 colored
St. Louis	95 whites	32 colored

(St. Louis had been organized that year)

Cape Girardeau District

Belle Vue	182 whites	16 colored
Saline	116 whites	16 colored
St. Francis	162 whites	40 colored
Cape Girar.	260 whites	
New Madrid	150 whites	24 colored
Spring River	109 whites	12 colored
White River	138 whites	18 colored.

[20]

This made a total of 1976 whites and 247 blacks, or 2223 Methodists. Black members were 11.1% of the total.

Table I shows the concentration of slave population by counties in the period 1820-1840. Emigrants from Southern states settled in the great river valleys (Missouri, Salt, Chariton) and in the city of St. Louis. These are obviously the areas of greatest concentration of slaves, and comprises the counties labeled on the maps in Table I and II.

Table I

Slave Population

25% or more

15-24%

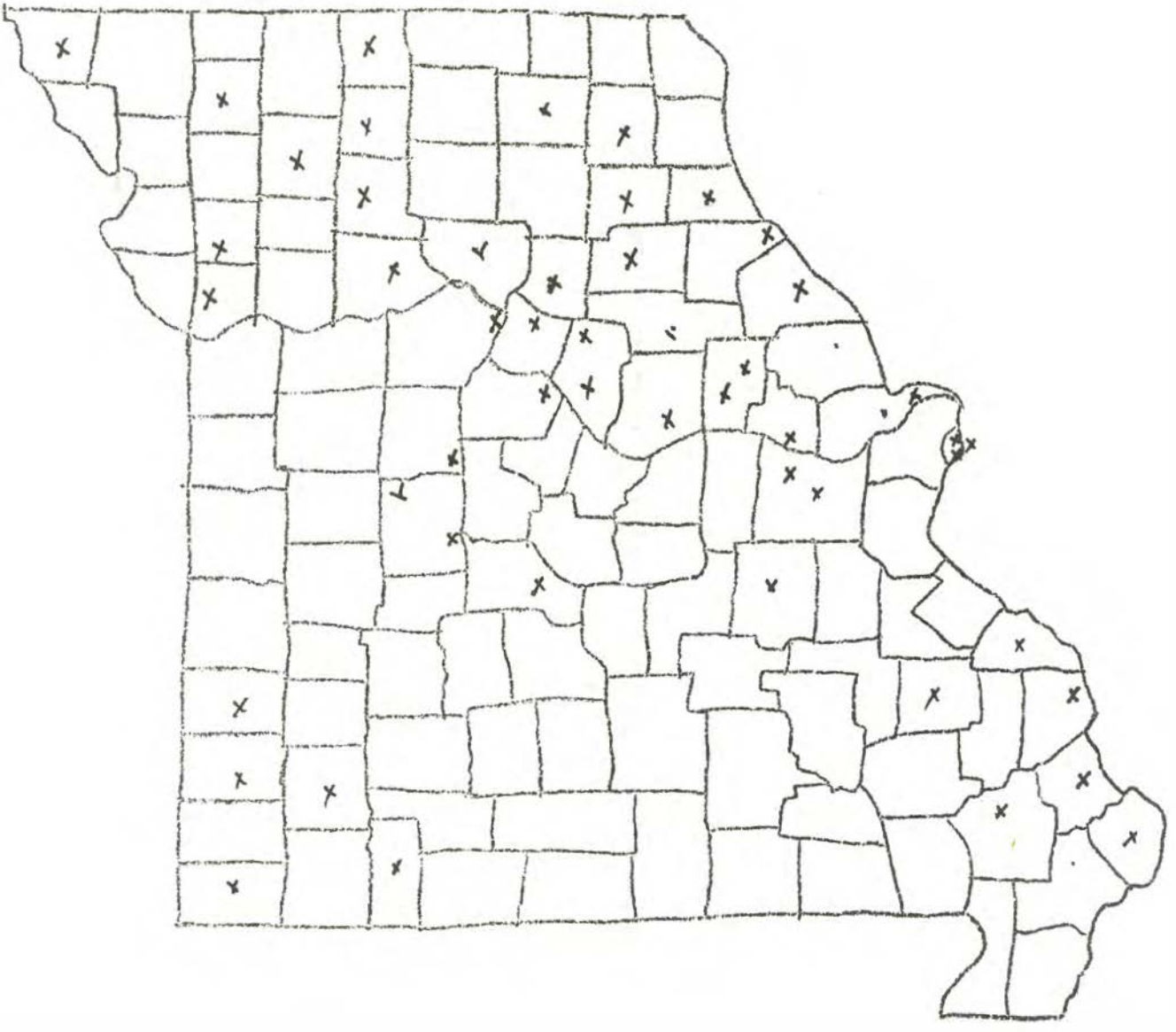

Table II

Location of circuits, 1840.

Northern Missouri was heavily under the influence of Iowa and Illinois settlers, most of whome were anti-slavery, and southern Missouri, with the broken Ozark Mountains and the great swamps of the southeast along the Mississippi, was never suited to large farming operations. The farms here were the kind described by McAnally---the family, with perhaps one or two slaves, working together.

Table II shows the location of Methodist circuits established by or before 1840. In the a7 counties (and the city of St. Louis) designated as having a high slave population, there were 35 churches, of which 7 were in the city of St. Louis. There were 48 churches in the rest of the state. The obvious first impression is that Methodist is strongest among those counties where the black population is the highest, and therefore highly successful in its mission to the black population.

There are least two ways to test that assumption, given the data at our disposal. Table III indicates the relative success of the Methodists in reaching both racial groups in comparison to the total population of each group, by years.[21]

TABLE III

YEAR	Slave pop.	Black Methodists	%	White pop.	White Meths.	%
1821	10,222	247	2.41	70,000	1,976	2.82
1830	25,091	379	1.51	115,626	3,369	2.91
1840	58,240	1,403	2.40	325,462	14,592	4.48

Except in 1821, the church does not have the same kind of percentage of black members as white, relative to the population. In 1830, the ratio of white members to population was nearly twice as high as black members to population, and the same is true for 1840. One suspects that the considerable decline in ratio from 1821 reflects some of the negative feelings of the white members that Jacob Lanius feared.

Table IV looks more carefully at specific churches within those 17 counties where the percentage of slave population was the highest. If the initial impression of Methodism being successful among blacks is correct, then the churches in those counties should have had a high ratio of black members, at least approaching that of the ratio of slaves in the population. The figures are for the year 1840, a year in which the data seem to be reasonably correct.[22]

TABLE IV

Circuit	Whites	Blacks	Total	% Black	% Black in Pop.
Columbia (Boone Co.)	333	99	432	22.9	22.22
Boonville (Cooper Co.)	516	34	550	6.18	20.6
Fayette (Howard Co.)	629	30	659	4.55	28.43
Independence (Jackson Co.)	416	6	422	1.42	17.89
Lexington (Lafayette Co)	516	36	552	6.52	29.31
St. Louis City	359	300	659	45.52	30.32
Arrow Rock (Saline Co.)	270	20	290	6.90	30.76

In only two churches in these counties with a heavy slave population does the percentage of blacks in the Methodist Church approach that of the blacks in the total population. One of these is Columbia, the other St. Louis, which has a much higher percentage of blacks in thc church than in the total population. But even in St. Louis, racial feelings were causing problems in the church. The same conference (1841) to which these statistics were reported appointed two pastors to a newly formed 'African Church' which, the following year, reported the entire black membership of the church in St. Louis. Separation had overcome the pioneering spirit of John Scripps and Jacob Lanius.

By contrast, some Methodist churches in areas with a low slave population were doing quite well in reaching the blacks. Table V shows a similar range of statistics for 5 churches chosen at random from across the state.[23]

TABLE V

Circuit	Whites	Blacks	Total	% Black	%Black in pop.
Bowling Green (Pike Co.)	196	34	230	14.78	15-24
Hannibal (Marion Co.)	376	26	402	6.47	15-24
Richmond (Ray Co.)	362	26	388	7.18	10-14
Cape Girardeau	565	15	580	2.59	5-9
St. Genevieve	240	71	311	22.83	5-9

Two of these churches, Hannibal and Bowling Green, are in the Salt

River and Mississippi River flood plains, in precisely those areas most settled by southerners. Two, St. Genevieve and Cape Girardeau, are in southeast Missouri, Cape being on the edge of the great swamp. One, Richmond, is in northwest Missouri. It is interesting to note, that, in 1839, Cape Girardeau circuit had 16.99% of its membership black. What happened in the intervening year? One wonders if the better ratio achieved by these churches in the southeast is a reflection of the closer relationships in the working world (described by McAnally) of small farmers with a few slaves working closely together. Certainly human relationships should have been more open.

Table VI shows those same churches in historical perspective, reflecting growth and change. To a certain extent, this historical data is 'skewed', changes often reflecting new circuits being formed from an old one, with consequent drastic changes in membership. However, this would not show up as abruptly at ten-year intervals, unless such a change had occured just before the decennial period.

TABLE VI

Circuit		1821	1830	1840
Columbia				
1834	white			333
	colored			99
Boonville *				
1818	white			516
	colored			34
Fayette				
1815	white	126**	345	629
	colored	20	6	30
Independence				
1834	white			416
	colored			6
Lexington				
1832	white			516
	colored			36
Arrow Rock				
1818	white	142*	361	270
	colored	3	16	20
St. Louis				
1821	white	95	134	359
	colored	32	124	300
Bowling Green				
1832	white			196
	colored			34

* In 1821 and 1830, Boonville and Arrow Rock were listed together as the Lamoine Circuit.

** In 1821 and 1830, Fayette was listed as the Boonslick Circuit.

Circuit		1821	1830	1840
Hannibal				
1838	white			376
	colored			26
Richmond ***				
1823	white		262	362
	colored		16	26
Cape Girardeau				
1809	white	260	325	565
	colored		33	15
St. Genevieve				
1839	white			240
	colored			71

Again, the churches which show the best pattern of reaching black persons are Columbia, St. Louis, Cape Girardeau (when you include the 1839 figures) and St. Genevieve. Two of these are in areas with a high percentage of slaves in the population, two are not. These percentages will remain fairly constant, with a slight drop everywhere, in the years 1840-44.

Methodism, from its very beginning in Missouri, was working with both black and white populations. The circuit riders felt an urgent call to minister to slaves, and found considerable success in the early period. However, the statistical tables demonstrate rather clearly that Methodism was never as successful with the slave population as with the whites. From the time of the first census, the ratio of white Methodists to the white population was always higher than the ratio of black Methodists to the black population. We have also seen that, with two notable exceptions, churches in the areas

*** In 1830, Richmond is listed as the Fishing River Circuit.

where the slave population was the highest never came anywhere near the ratio of black members that blacks had in the total population. In other areas across the state, they achieved somewhat better success, at least according to the statistics, but again with the exception of one or two churches, never reached the ratio of black members as the ratio of blacks in the total population. We can only conclude that, despite concentrated efforts, Methodism did much better among the white population than among the black, and even where it did well among the black population (as in St. Louis) separation of the races was beginning to occur by 1840.

So an interesting patttern emerges in these early years. Methodism succeeds fairly well in reaching the black population, though not nearly so well as the whites. There is an initial positive response by blacks to Methodist preaching. There are many examples of blacks and whites worshipping together, and the development of some black leadership in the class meetings, and in the ranks of local preachers and exhorters. By the 1830s, there is a leveling off of black membership. It would be interesting to know the effects of national events (e.g., Denmark Vesey's revolt in 1822, Nat Turner's rebellion in 1831) on black-white feelings in Missouri. Did white Methodists stop evangelizing ---or welcoming---blacks as a response to growing racial fears? Were blacks in the state fearful of a 'white backlash' and stay away from the

church? What about feelings evoked by the Missouri Compromise and Missouri's admission to the Union as a slave state? Was the underground railroad effecting black-white feelings? Those are questions still to be researched.

By 1840, there is again a large increase in the number of black Methodists, but they have already begun to form separate churches under pressure from whites. This, again, is an area calling for more research, with scanty sources to search among.

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FOOTNOTES

1. Frank C. Tucker, The Methodist Church in Missouri, 1798-1939. (Nashville: Parthenon Press, 1960), p.19

2. Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church: Volume I, 1773-1828 (New York: T. Mason and G. Lane, 1840), report of the Western Conference, 1807.

3. Ibid., report from Western Conference, Cumberland District, 1808.

4. Ibid., report from Western Conference, Indiana District, 1810.

5. Edwin C. McReynolds, Missouri: A History of the Crossroads State. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1962), p.51

6. Dwight W. Culver, Negro Segregation in the Methodist Church. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953), p.42.

7. Ibid.

8. Minutes of the Annual Conferences, Vol. I, cit., report from the Tennessee Conference, Missouri District, 1816, p. 282

9. Ibid., Minutes for 1780, p.12

10. W. M. Wrightman in the Southern Quarterly Review, cited by Culver, p.44.

11. David Rice McAnally, A History of Methodism in Missouri, Volume I. (St. Louis: Advocate Publishing House, 1881), pp. 147-8

12. Western Christian Advocate, Jan. 20, 1843, cited by McAnally, p. 208

13. Western Christian Advocate, March 3, 1843, cited by McAnally, p. 225

14. Ibid.

15. The Journal of the Reverend Jacob Lanius, ed. by Elmer T. Clark, 1918. Transcribed and re-edited by Theodore H. Wolff, 1963. Manuscript in possession of the United Methodist Commission on Archives and History, Lake Junaluska, North Carolina. All citations are from the Wolff transcription. April, 1834, p. 21.

16. Ibid., March 6, 1836, p.47.

17. Ibid., ~~March 6, 1836~~, p.48.

18. Ibid., ~~March 6, 1836~~, p.60.

19. Ibid., ~~March 6, 1836~~, p.62.

20. Minutes of the Missouri Annual Conference, 1821. Hand-written manuscript in the manuscript collection of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Collection #2039, Missouri State Historical Society Archives, Columbia, Mo. The reliability of early records begins to appear in question here. The printed General Minutes show considerably fewer black members than does Scripps' hand-written copy. We have chosen to follow the manuscript copy. It must be pointed out that, at least until after 1830, we cannot be certain as to the exact figures for any given circuit in any given year. Conclusions drawn from these reports will have to remain tentative, although the data are probably sufficiently accurate to justify the conclusions.

21. Compiled from McReynolds, op. cit., p. 163, Minutes of the Annual Conferences Vol. I, 1773-1828, Vol. II 1829-1839, Vol. III 1840-1845, and from David D. March, The History of Missouri, Vol. I (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co. 1967), p. 41c.

22. Compiled from McReynolds, op. cit, p. 164, Minutes of the Annual Conferences Vol. III, p. 101, and from James W. McGettigan, Jr., "Boone Co. Slaves:Sales, Estate Divisions and Families, 1820-1865, Part I", Missouri Historical Review, Vol. LXXII, No. 2, January, 1978, p. 186.

23. Ibid.

24. Compiled from the Minutes of the Annual Conferences, for the years cited.

MCKENDREE CHURCH

In the early 1800s there was a settlement near the southwest corner of Lafayette County, Missouri, known as Chapel Hill where an early day college was built and later destroyed under Order Number 11 of the Civil War.

In the valley a few miles east was a settlement of Cobb and Wagoner families. They had moved from Kentucy and Tennessee to Missouri. This writer is a grandson of those two families.

In the home of James Cobb, about the year 1840, a group of settlers met and organized a church that for some time met in the Cobb home. Out of that Cobb home came four sons who spent many years in the ministry of the Methodist Church. I remember only three of the names: Tom, Pete, and Will.

When the group acquired enough support and decided to build a church, my grandfather, William G. Wagoner, offered to give the land for the church and cemetery. The offer was accepted and the land was deeded to a Board of Trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, with a handwritten deed worded as follows: "In consideration of the sum of the love I bear for the cause of Christ I do grant and give for church and graveyard purpose...."

A few years later, a building was erected, and according to the membership list in some old records, it appears that every name in the community must have joined. The name "McKendree" was given to the church by common consent, after our early day Bishop, William McKendree. This stood for many years as the center of community interest and activity.

About that time there was organized a Vigilante Committee, as no local officer was available. A young man had stolen a set of harness and was arrested and brought to the church for a hear-

ing. He was convicted and he confessed the crime, saying he was planning to get married and didn't have the money to buy the equipment to farm, so he stole the harness. The Committee sentenced him to be whipped. It fell the lot of my father to lay on the punishment. By the time it was applied, a big northwest storm was brewing. The young man was a long way from home, on foot. So my father, who had whipped him, took him home and shared his bed with him, and then sent him on his way the next morning.

Records show that a church caretaker for that time was paid less than $20 a year and furnished the coal oil for the lamps.

In the year 1886 the church building was wrecked by what came to be known as the eleventh of May storm. In 1888, when the new building was to be built a small congregation at Chapel Hill had no building. So, since McKendree was on a circuit and had the service of a pastor only one Sunday per month, this group of Cumberland Presbyterians gave some assistance in the building and were granted its use one Sunday per month for their pastor. The 30 x 50 foot church was built at a cost of $1100, for material only. The work was donated by the church people. Everyone attended all the services and one Sunday School served all for a period of fifty years in perfect harmony.

The present building was built in 1888. In 1957, a new basement was dug and the building was totally modernized.

The greatest and most notable accomplishment of the McKendree Church was that, from its influence, fifteen or more committed themselves to full-time ministry in the church.

About 1973 the membership had dwindled to the point where the community could no longer maintain and survive as a Methodist congregation. The conference released their claim to the building to the McKendree Cemetery Association, and the building has since been used as a nonsectarian Community Church.

R. Earl Wagoner, of Odessa, is a 93-year-old grandson of the founding families of the McKendree Church.

THE BEGINNINGS OF METHODISM IN ST. LOUIS 1798-1822

Penelope Anderson Gladwell

The great westward expansion at the end of the eighteenth century swept people into the pristine wildernesses of the Ohio and Mississippi Valleys. And along with them came the evangelical fervor and missionary zeal of New England Protestantism. Methodists, like other denominations, followed the settlers as far as the plains of Illinois but balked at crossing the Mississippi River. "Aboriginies",[1] Indians, and unscrupulous adventurers were all that awaited them on the other side.

But with courageous settlers moving to the pleasant hills to the west came the beginning of preaching circuits in that territory and traveling ministers making regular visits to the small settlements. The village of St. Louis, a Roman Catholic stronghold on the river's edge, however, remained untouched by Protestants until the turn of the century.

This paper gives a brief account of the growth of Methodism in the West and, in particular, in the city of St. Louis.

The early history of the Missouri territory is a colorful tapestry of French explorers, Spanish militia, and English-speaking pioneers. But a dominant thread in the weave was Roman Catholicism. It was the established religion of major settlements along the Mississippi River as early as 1764.[2] Protestants who migrated west from Western Virginia and North Carolina remained scattered in the hillsides around the Catholic-ruled villages. In fact, the village of St. Louis passed a law in 1799 forbidding the holding of religious services by Protestants[3] and enforced the edict with police surveillance.[4] Diaries and journals recount the hardships Protestants endured in an effort to worship God according to the dictates of their conscience[5] without support of clergy.

Probably the first Protestant preacher to venture across the Mississippi into "Missouri" was Reverend John Clark.[6] Originally from Georgia, Clark studied in England with John Wesley in 1788, was ordained elder in the Methodist Church in 1795, and was sent to Kentucky. In 1798 records show he crossed into Missouri and preached from a boat to settlers in Herculaneum as well as in the homes of people in the Cold Water settlement (near the present Bridgeton in St. Louis County.)[7]

Clark sustained efforts to serve these settlements in Missouri which led to the inclusion of his territory in the Illinois Circuit served by Joseph Oglesby in 1804.[8] Oglesby spent a year traveling the areas now known as St. Charles, Femme Osage, Welston, and Farmington.[9] Oglesby's favorable report to the Western Conference[10] resulted in Illinois/Missouri being included in the Cumberland District of that conference. The next year (1806) John Travis [11] was appointed to the Missouri Circuit which included all the territory from Pike County to Pemiscot County and fifty miles west from the river.[12] According to conference records the Missouri Circuit first appeared as a separate listing the next year (1807) and along with Meramec showed a total of 106 members.[13]

Bishop William McKendree appointed Jesse Walker, "a quiet, plain, unobtrusive, gentle, persuasive, kind, affable probationer"[14] to assist Travis in this extended Illinois circuit. By 1808 Walker was ordained an elder and appointed to the Missouri Circuit, and a young revivalist names Thomas Wright was given the Meramec post.[15]

In 1809 a new circuit was added on the western side of the Mississippi. Named "Cold Water" it began with thirty-nine members and included (geographically) the village of St. Louis.[16] However, there were no classes formed in the town; only evening prayer services were held only in four weeks. [17]

There are several factors which help explain the apparent lack of interest on the part of Methodists toward St. Louis. First, there was the nature of the town itself. It had grown from a Spanish

fortification to a French fur-trading post and then to a village by 1766. By 1804 there were 180 houses and a population of nine hundred. That very year marked the beginning influx of American settlers and the change from French architecture to frame and brick homes. Village merchants -- a baker, two tavernkeepers, three blacksmiths, and two millers -- joined others who did business from their homes.[18]

"A violent party spirit" developed and "arrogance, persecution, and unprincipled ambition" became the rule of the day, according to Joseph Charless, a local newspaperman.[19] The town was referred to as "the fountainhead of devilism"[20] either for the nature of the people inhabiting it or for the Catholic faith which controlled politics and economics in St. Louis.

The other factor was the attitude of Methodist people toward the town and its residents. For many years St. Louis was the home of foreigners and Catholics,[21] so Protestants justified their status as "outsiders" with such statements as:

> God made the country and there He will acknowledge and bless the people; but the devil made the towns and those who live in them are unapproachable by preaching. (St. Louis Christian Advocate, March 31, 1853.)

or

> While most of the Americans who came here ..... were raised up under Protestant influence, yet not finding here the institutions of their youth and being moreover intent on business pursuits, soon came to forget religious restraints.[22]

There was a "real or apparent" opposition on the part of preachers to visit in towns.[23] After twelve years of Methodism in Missouri, there had been no continuous effort to form a class or society in St. Louis.[24]

Meanwhile Methodism flourished in the surrounding hills. By conference time the Missouri Circuit had 102 members, Maramack (note spelling change) 354, and Cold Water 72.[25] These three circuits were added to the Indiana District and two men were appointed to serve Maramack.[26] Meanwhile Jesse Walker went south of St. Louis to Cape Girardeau where he and John Scripps organized the New Madrid Circuit.[27]

(It is interesting to note that beginning in 1811 conference records list both black and white members in all three circuits in the Indiana Distrist.[28])

The westward expansion of people, including Methodists, called for constant re-alignment of conferences and districts. In 1812 a "Western Country" was formed consisting of Ohio, Tennessee, and Mississippi. Jesse Walker was named Presiding Elder of the Illinois District of the Tennessee Conference, which included the Missouri (80 members), Cold Water (140 white, 18 black members), and Maramack (340 white, 18 black members) circuits.[29]

1816 marked the formation of the Missouri Conference.[30] It also marked the expansion of the town of St. Louis west of Fourth Street to the Lucas Addition -- the old Commonfield, now the site of the Old Courthouse. The industrial revolution (in the form of steam-powered boats) was only one year away and still Methodists had not impacted the town.[31]

On New Years Day, 1817, John Scripps, now a member in full connection and assigned to the Cold Water Circuit, began holding preaching services in St. Louis at the home of the publisher Joseph Charless.[32] In spite of setbacks Scripps believed in the church's obligation to the town. Using his business contacts he secured a thespian hall and held services there among the drama sets and props every third Sunday until September.[33]

When the Missouri Conference met that year in Bethel Chapel (Illinois),[34] Scripps asked for someone to be appointed to St. Louis. The request was not filled. In January, 1818, Presiding

Elder Walker transferred Thomas Wright to St. Louis, but Wright preferred the circuit and neglected the city.[35]

It was at this point in history that some unusual circumstances occurred which led directly to the "taking of St. Louis" for Methodism. Jesse Walker, circuit preacher and two-term presiding elder came away from the 1819 Conference with an appointment as "Missionary-at-large" for the Conference. That meant no specific charge -- and no financial support.[36] He was to select his own field of labor. Walker decided on St. Louis. He was aware of John Scripps' efforts in the town and the difficulty in securing regular preaching there. He may also have been aware that St. Louis was well settled and Missouri was on its way to statehood. There was no longer a need for the "frontier methods" of church expansion.[37] The story goes that when Walker first arrived in town the legislature was meeting and there were no available rooms. He was laughed at and insulted and found no sympathy for his plight.[38] But, absorbed in his cause, he surveyed the town for Methodists, secured a temporary meeting place in the Baptist building, rented a dwelling (there were still few public structures), and set up a school to teach reading and spelling five days a week.[39] Walker kept Sabbath meetings and evening prayer meetings. He spread Methodism by making pastoral visits to people in their homes and places of business.[40]

By the time of Annual Conference 1820 a snug little chapel (35 x 25) had been erected at Spruce and Third, paid for completely, and was used regularly by seventy church members.[41] In January, 1821, the first Methodist society was formed in St. Louis.[42] In that year, when Missouri gained statehood, Jesse Walker added eighty-seven new members to the Methodist Church,[43] held a camp meeting,[44] and was appointed special missionary to St. Louis along with Alexander McAlister (St. Louis Circuit.)[45]

In October of 1822, the Missouri Annual Conference, consisting of fifty preachers, met for the first time in the city of St. Louis. In one year's time Jesse Walker and others had established a church in the newly-incorporated city.

There can be no doubt that Jesse Walker was an important figure in the founding of Methodism in St. Louis. It was his gift of relating to people -- the black, the poor, the business community -- which commenced many works of grace. His class meetings and love feasts were the life of the church in the new frontier.

But it was also the polity of the church -- the combination of local preachers and itinerating pastors; the insight of presiding elders and bishops; the use of annual conferences to gather information and strategize for church expansion -- that gave shape to the westward movement of the church. The taking of St. Louis is another account of a victory for the vision, courage, and faithfulness of the people called Methodist.

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NOTES

1. "We hope the aboriginese of our country, the Spaniards of South America, the French of Louisiana and Canada and every other people who are destitute of the invaluable blessings of the Gospel, as far as our means may admit, will be comprehended in the field of our zealous missionaries." Methodist Magazine, vol. 2, 1819, p. 301.

2. D.R. McAnally, History of Methodism in Missouri, St. Louis, 1881, p. 242.

3. J.E. Godbey, Pioneer Methodism in Missouri, Kirkwood, 1929, p. 4.

4. St. Louis Christian Advocate, February 24, 1853.

5. Ibid. This refers to one Patterson family. Godbey includes a story of the Commandant, a man named Trudeau, being indulgent to John Clark. Also a settler named Abham Musick applied for a permit to hold services in his home. This was allowed as long as he "remained a good Catholic" and caused no disturbances like ringing a bell. Pioneer Methodism in Missouri, p. 3.

6. St. Louis Christian Advocate, February 24, 1853.

7. J. Thomas Scharf, History of St. Louis: City and County, Philadelphia, 1883, p. 1669.

8. Emory S. Bucke, History of American Methodism, vol. 1, New York, 1964, pp. 402-3.

9. Scharf, op. cit., p. 1683.

10. The Western Conference included the Mississippi Valley and the land west of the Allegheny Mountains. The Cumberland District consisted of Indiana, Illinois, West Tennessee, Missouri, and Arkansas as they are known now. Scharf, op. cit., p. 1683.

11. "Methodism was introduced into Missouri by Rev. John Travis.... he formed the first regular circuit in this then new territory of Missouri. Mr. Travis was greatly aided by Rev. Jesse Walker who had been appointed the same year to labor in Illinois. These pioneers crossed the Father of waters, the Mississippi, into a region that was at that time truly a 'moral waste.' W. W. Redman in the Western Christian Advocate, Vol. 10 #5, May 19, 1843.

12. Charles Orrin Ransford, John Scripps: Methodist preacher and newspaperman, Shelbina, 1960, p. 11.

13. W. S. Woodard, Annals of Methodism in Missouri, Columbia, 1893, p. 3.

14. St. Louis Christian Advocate, March 31, 1853.

15. Woodard, op. cit., p. 11.

16. Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church 1773-1828, New York, 1840, p. 169.

17. McAnally, op. cit., p. 242.

18. Scharf, op. cit., p. 1670.

19. Almer Pennewell, A Voice in the Wilderness, Nashville, p. 96.

20. Pennewell, op. cit., p. 95.

21. Godbey, op. cit., p. 28.

22. McAnally, op. cit., p. 242.

23. St. Louis Christian Advocate, March 31, 1853.

24. Ibid.

25. Minutes, op. cit., p. 181.

26. Ibid., p. 184.

27. Ransford, op. cit., p. 15.

28. Minutes, p. 196.

29. Ibid., p. 227, 230.

30. McAnally, op. cit., p. 294.

31. Paul C. Schulte, Catholic Heritage of St. Louis, St. Louis, 1934, p. 101.

32. Godbey, op. cit., p. 37.

33. Woodard, op. cit., p. 38.

34. J. Gordon Melton, Log Cabins to Steeples, Nashville, 1974, p. 11.

35. Pennewell, op. cit., p. 96.

36. Ibid., p. 110.

37. Ibid., p. 113.

38. McAnally, op. cit., p. 234.

39. Ibid., pp. 235-8.

40. Ibid., p. 247.

41. Ibid., p. 273.

42. Francis E. Williams, Centenary Methodist Church of St. Louis, 1839 - 1939. St. Louis, 1939, p. 4.

43. McAnally, op. cit., p. 255.

44. Ibid., p. 247.

45. St. Louis Christian Advocate, March 13, 1853.

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